What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method comprising:

2   starting a computer system comprising at least one component;

3   determining whether the at least one component has been tested;

4   if not, testing the at least one component, and

5   otherwise, not testing the at least one component.

1   2.   The method recited in claim 1 and further comprising, if the at least one

2   component is tested:

3   storing an indication that the at least one component has been tested.

1   3.   The method recited in claim 2, wherein the indication comprises a

2   predetermined bit pattern.

1   4.   The method recited in claim 3 wherein determining further comprises checking

2   for the predetermined bit pattern.

1   5.   The method recited in claim 4 and further comprising, if such predetermined

2   bit pattern is present:

3   booting the computer system.

1   6.   The method recited in claim 4 and further comprising, if such predetermined

2   bit pattern is present:

3   determining whether a field test is ordered, and

4   if so, testing the at least one component, and

5   otherwise, booting the computer system.

1   7.   The method recited in claim 6 and further comprising, after testing:

2   determining whether the test was successful; and

3   if so, providing an indication that the at least one component has been tested, and

4   otherwise, providing an error indication.

1   8.   The method recited in claim 2 and further comprising after storing:

2   restarting the computer system.

1   9.   The method recited in claim 1 and further comprising, if the at least one

2 component is tested:

3   determining whether the test was successful, and

4   if so, storing an indication that the at least one component has been tested, and

5   otherwise, providing an error indication.

1   10.   The method recited in claim 1 and further comprising, if the at least one

2 component is not tested:

3   booting the computer system.

1   11.   The method recited in claim 10, wherein booting comprises:

2   initializing the at least one component; and

3   loading a portion of an operating system into memory.

1   12.   The method recited in claim 1 wherein determining further comprises checking

2 for the presence of a test to test the at least one component.

1   13.   The method recited in claim 12 and further comprising, if such a test is not

2 present:

3   booting the computer system.

1   14.   The method recited in claim 12 wherein checking comprises checking for the

2   presence of a predetermined bit pattern.

1   15.   A computing device having at least one component and executing a computer

2   program comprising the operations of:

3   upon receiving a command to start the computing device, determining whether the at

4   least one component has been tested; and

5   if not, testing the at least one component, and

6   otherwise, not testing the at least one component.

1   16.   The computing device recited in claim 15 wherein the computer program

2   further comprises the operation of:

3   if the at least one component is tested, storing an indication that the at least one

4   component has been tested.

1   17.   The computing device recited in claim 16 wherein the computer program

2   further comprises the operation of:

3   after storing, restarting the computing device.

1   18.   The computing device recited in claim 15 wherein the computer program

2   further comprises the operation of:

3   if the at least one component is tested, determining whether the test was successful;

4   and

5   if so, storing an indication that the at least one component has been tested, and

6   otherwise, providing an error indication.

1   19.   The computing device recited in claim 15 wherein the computer program

2   further comprises the operation of:

3   if the at least one component is not tested, booting the computing device.

1   20.   The computing device recited in claim 19 wherein, in booting, the at least one

2   component is initialized, and a portion of an operating system is loaded into memory.

1   21.   The computing device recited in claim 15 wherein, in determining, a check is

2   made for the presence of a test to test the at least one component.

1   22.   The computing device recited in claim 21 wherein the computer program

2   further comprises the operation of:

3   if such a test is not present, booting the computing device.

1   23.   The computing device recited in claim 21 wherein, in checking, a check is

2   made for the presence of a predetermined bit pattern.

1   24.   An article comprising a machine-accessible medium having associated

2   instructions, wherein the instructions, when accessed, result in a machine comprising at least

3   one component performing:

4   upon receiving a command to start the machine, determining whether the at least one

5   component has been tested;

6   if not, testing the at least one component, and

7   otherwise, not testing the at least one component.

1   25.   The article of claim 24 wherein the instructions, when accessed, additionally

2   result in the machine performing:

3   if the at least one component is tested, storing an indication that the at least one

4   component has been tested.

1   26.   The article of claim 25 wherein the instructions, when accessed, additionally

2   result in the machine performing:

3   after storing, restarting the machine.

1   27.   The article of claim 24 wherein the instructions, when accessed, additionally

2   result in the machine performing:

3   if the at least one component is tested, determining whether the test was successful;

4   and

5   if so, storing an indication that the at least one component has been tested, and

6   otherwise, providing an error indication.

1   28.   The article of claim 24 wherein the instructions, when accessed, additionally

2   result in the machine performing:

3   if the at least one component is not tested, booting the machine.

1   29.   The article of claim 28 wherein the instructions, when accessed, additionally

2   result in the machine performing:

3   in booting, the at least one component is initialized, and a portion of an operating

4   system is loaded into memory.

1   30.   The article of claim 24 wherein the instructions, when accessed, additionally

2   result in the machine performing:

3   in determining, a check is made for the presence of a test to test the at least one

4   component and, if such a test is not present, booting the machine.